



# GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

November 2014 VOLUME 5 ISSUE 11

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# It's all about follow-through: shortsightedness in criminal justice, mental health and education



by Susan Beckett  
Publisher

Our expectations play a great part in how we react to outcomes. It seems that Michiganders now expect derailment of policies with which they disagree rather than progress that might, in part, validate an opposing point of view. Instead of compromise in service of imperfect-but-real progress, we have gridlock or ever-changing policies.

When you read Peggy's piece this month, "Justice or not," you will likely feel her pain as she struggles to come to terms with the abuse she has suffered and society's failure to acknowledge it. She is not a vindictive person motivated by revenge – she is struggling to emerge from victimhood.

The criminal justice system is poorly equipped to meet her needs. Had her case been referred to a restorative justice court, Peggy would have had a real opportunity to address what actually happened to her in a way that could still allow the perpetrator an opportunity to reform. The traditional court system seeks to expeditiously clear the docket, while a peacemaking court seeks resolutions that allow the victim to move forward and the perpetrator to feel and express true remorse. It takes more time, but leaves the principals feeling that real justice has been served.

Next issue's article about Debbie Dingell reveals that even someone as well-connected as she could not successfully navigate the Michigan mental health system. There is widespread agreement that mental illness needs treatment, but the lack of facilities often forces even those in dire need to wait weeks for help. And a shortage of caseworkers leads to a lack of follow-up when a patient in crisis is released.

Michigan schools have been losing

ground to other states, but not because we don't try the same initiatives as other states. According to *Bridge Magazine*, it is because we don't stay the course long enough for them to pay dividends. Routinely changing the assessment tools for students and teachers has robbed both of the opportunity to master any.

While states like Florida and Tennessee have invested in training their teachers to achieve specific objectives, Michigan has failed to do any statewide teacher training, relying instead on the unfocused but state-mandated continuing education credits required of most teachers. Cash-strapped districts like Ann Arbor have cut way back on their teacher in-services.

Massachusetts and Minnesota have directed significant funding to disadvantaged schools so they can reduce their student-to-teacher ratio, and have seen great gains by poor and minority students. In Michigan, underperforming schools are used as evidence of the need for charter schools. Now we have

underperforming, underfunded charter schools, too.

Computerized, standardized testing in Michigan starts in kindergarten, so achievement, or the lack thereof, can be tracked from the start. However, the assessment vehicle used changes multiple times over the course of the child's school years. This leaves us comparing apples to pears. It also disrupts the learning continuum as the outcomes deemed most important vary with the tests. The latest controversy of this sort is over adoption of the Common Core curriculum and its associated test.

The common thread is a lack of determination to achieve the desired societal result supported by a vast majority of voters. Political wrangling over issues such as unions versus charter schools, accountability versus expediency, and privatization versus expanding government have us at each other's throats instead of working together, committed to a long-term strategy that achieves those goals upon which we can agree. Regardless of who wins which elections, it is time for that to change – for good.

## GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

*Creating opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.*

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## League of Women Voters *did* hold debates

Dear Editor,

When I saw the headline, "Where are the debates?," I was surprised. The League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area faithfully conducts candidate forums for *every* primary and *every* general election – and has done so for many years. During the month of October, we have so far held 12 forums for local candidates – in both Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti.

Where are these forums? They are being rebroadcast on Community Television Network Channel 19 up until the day before the November 4 election.

On Friday, October 24, we will co-sponsor (with the U-M's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy) yet *another* forum for the U-M Board of Regents, a statewide race.

Yes, we agree that many candidates running for statewide office are reluctant to participate in debates, but our local candidates are eager to present themselves and their ideas to the community. The proof? Local candidates appeared in LWV-AAA forums for Ann Arbor Mayor, Ypsilanti City Council, 22nd Circuit Court Judge, Washtenaw County Probate Judge, Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, State Senator, State Representatives, Washtenaw Community College Board of Trustees, Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Edu-

cation and the Ypsilanti Community Schools Board of Education.

Where *else* are these forums? Voters simply need to go to our website, [www.lwvannarbor.org](http://www.lwvannarbor.org), and follow the link to the Elections Page to view them on demand, *any time*.

Yes, we do need more forums and debates; but the League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area are certainly doing our part to assist voters in making informed choices at the polls. Please spread the word.

Sincerely,

Nancy Schewe, Co-President  
League of Women Voters of the Ann Arbor Area

## Groundcover available at Westgate Mall's Village Kitchen!

Thanks to Helen Panos, owner of the popular Westside eatery, The Village Kitchen, Groundcover is now regularly available in Ann Arbor outside of downtown. Panos invited Groundcover News to station a vendor on her sidewalks to offer the newspaper to the steady crowd of Saturday and Sunday breakfast and lunch customers.

Mike Dion, pictured on the cover, has been there regularly for the past couple of months. Stop by and see him there on your way in to eat or just to pick up a paper.

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## Learning with the aspens



by Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell  
Groundcover Contributor

I love this time of year. I always have. I know that, for some, autumn or fall is a struggle. There is no appeal to cooling temperatures, shortening days, and leaves that fall and crunch underfoot. Autumn brings up mortality, relinquishment, letting go, and loss. All this can be overwhelming. For me, however, the brief but brilliant flash of color this season offers is still thrilling. The poet Mary Oliver said it well when she wrote of trees “turning their own bodies into pillars of light.” The trees only blaze for a few weeks, but the

bright orange, yellow, and red colors, blended and contrasted with browns and purples, are showstoppers.

Where I grew up in the northeast, sugar maples were the stars. They added a reliable red to the hillsides and brought leaf-peepers from all over the country. Much of the beautiful yellow hung on the slender white trunks of paper birches, a tree that Robert Frost celebrated in more than one poem. Paper birches are a favorite of mine. For a long time as an adult, I would always wonder when I saw a poster of aspens in the fall – thin white trunks with yellow leaves – why it wasn’t a poster of birches. Aspens, which I hadn’t known as a child, seemed redundant if you had paper birches on your tree palette. And then I learned something about aspens that changed my opinion.

A single aspen stand spreads by what is known as the vegetative method. Aspen trees grow roots close to the ground’s surface. From these roots new trees sprout that are genetic copies of the parent tree. There is an aspen stand in Utah that includes 47,000 trees across 106 acres with a common root system. Two Michigan biologists have identified it as the largest living thing on earth. The DNA of all those trees is the same.

Aspens have become for me a growing symbol of community and connection. In a world of splintering differences, they embody what we have in common. At a time of devastating loneliness in our culture, they are a reminder of our fundamental communion. Whenever I lead a program or retreat, I have a beautiful aspen bowl that I pass among participants. I ask them to take a moment to hold the bowl, to add

their touch to its patina, and to sense everyone else who has held it before them or who will cradle it after them. An aspen stand gently challenges us to seek the connective tissue that will keep us vital.

Groundcover News is such connective tissue. As an issue of the paper changes hands from a vendor to a purchaser, our common lot is affirmed. When those sheltered well and those with no shelter work together on the difficult issue of homelessness, we discover what binds us. People who would never have known one another put words to paper or read what someone has written, and a relationship is established. Over and over, each month, in an expanding network, this occurs. Like a beautiful aspen stand, in season after season we witness to the vastness that holds us as one.

## A working class campaign in the elections

by Ken Jannot  
Groundcover Contributor

Thank you, Ann Arbor!

If you’d been to the Ann Arbor Farmers’ Market at Kerrytown, or to the Ann Arbor Public Library, or to the Blake Transit Center in the months of May and June, chances were good that you saw a group of folks gathering signatures to get Working Class candidates on the ballot. I was one member of that group.

You may have signed our petition, and for that we thank you. We were successful – we got on the ballot. Come November 4, five candidates will appear on ballots in Southeastern Michigan standing for a *Working Class Policy*, and a *Working Class Fight*.

The Candidate in Ann Arbor will be Gary Walkowicz, running as an independent for Congress in the 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional district. Other candidates include Sam Johnson in the 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional district, Mary Anne Her- ing and myself, Ken Jannot, for Dearborn Public School Board, and David Roehrig for Wayne County Community College District Board of Trustees.

Our campaign is based on one basic idea: Working people should not have to pay for a crisis they didn’t create. Large corporations and banks created the crisis. But they’re back to pulling down record profits while our standard of living has taken a hit and continues to be attacked. We’re running in this election to insist that the attack needs to stop, and to give working people the opportunity to send that message with their votes.

The money is there for all of us to have a comfortable standard of living. Those corporations and banks are sitting on nearly \$8 trillion in liquid assets. Working people created that wealth. We should be benefitting from it – not the people who wrecked the economy.

We say: No corporation should be allowed to lay off workers if it is making a profit. In fact, they should be made to hire: share the work out equally so that everyone has a job, at a truly livable wage. There’s more than enough work that needs to be done: investment should be made to rebuild the infrastructure that they’ve allowed to fall apart in recent years – no more cuts to public services. In addition, all of our schools should be fully funded and kept fully public.

“Working people should not have to pay for a crisis they didn’t create.”

And if they refuse to go along with this, they should just be taken over, with no compensation. Working peoples’ lives matter more than corporate profit.

That is what we stand for. If that sounds good to you, you can send that message with a vote for Gary Walkowicz for Congress on November 4.

To find out more, or if you’d like to help out in any way, you can contact the campaign at

[www.workingclassfight.com](http://www.workingclassfight.com), or 313-603-7983.

Ken Jannot is a part-time English instructor at several Detroit area community colleges, including Henry Ford College. He is a candidate for the Dearborn School Board, which is also the Board of Trustees for Henry Ford College.



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## Why and when “unions” became a dirty word



by **Martin Stolzenberg**  
Groundcover  
Contributor

In the 1950s, when I was in college, my father made a middle-class income of about \$10,000 a year. That doesn't sound like much today, but allowing for inflation that comes to about \$67,000 a year in 2014 dollars. That's about one-third higher than today's average family income of about \$51,000, according to *The U.S. Census Bureau*.

Not bad for a man who had come to the United States as a 15-year-old immigrant and found work as a busboy at Ratner's, a famous dairy restaurant in the Lower East Side of New York City. Working his way up to a waiter was about as far as he got on the promotion scale.

His story was a tale repeated millions of times in our country in the mid-20th century. The reason my Pop made this middle-class living was “the union.” And, growing up in Brooklyn, it was almost a sacred word in our household. My father was a proud member of Local 2 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees International Union. This tale is worth telling here to humanize the role that unions have played in our society.

How the union was able to achieve a breakthrough at these establishments traced back to the early 1940s, when it was difficult to unionize. If the waiters and waitresses went out on strike, it was easy to round up some unskilled service workers to cross the picket lines for a day's wage.

Then someone in the Local 2's management came up with a brilliant idea. He approached James Petrillo, prominent leader of the Federation of Musicians, a trade union of professional musicians. He was implored, as a fellow worker, to honor the restaurant employees' strikes and to not have his musicians cross the waiter's picket lines. He agreed.

This struck fear in the employers' hearts. After all, waiters were a dime-a-dozen, but musicians were irreplaceable at a catered affair. Sure, this was strong-arming the employers, but they had resisted forever the challenge of unionization; there was nothing illegal about this maneuver. This was not a great hardship on management's pocketbooks. With this capitulation, they simply passed the additional cost onto the people making the event. The result:

no longer would a party's attendees throw a couple of dollars on the table as a tip.

Members were consequently able to make decent salaries with fringe benefits. As a result of this agreement, thousands of New York waiters and waitresses entered the middle-class. Our family of four now lived in a sunny two bedroom apartment in Brooklyn. We had health insurance, went for yearly medical check-ups and twice-a-year dentist visits. My mother was a stay-at-home mom with a once-a-week housekeeper, and we vacationed for two weeks in a rented upstate cottage in the summertime. My step-brother and I were able to go full-time to local colleges. We became, respectively, a lawyer and a businessman, an indication of the long-term effect of this rise in his income. It was not a regal existence, but it was a decent existence, all attributable to the union.

That is my family's personal history. Now let's see how this has played out in contemporary times.

What is it like for waiters and waitresses today?

According to *wiserwaitress.com*, “Waiters in the U.S. often receive little or no training, have no benefits, pay for their own health insurance and are recycled through an imperfect tipping system that has steadily eroded the right workers have to claim their tips.”

This precipitous descent in the standard of living of the waitering trade happened because union membership declined sharply, says *Wiser Waitress*. On a wider scale, according to a Center for American Progress report in September 2013, “Since 1968, union membership in the United States declined from 28.3 percent to a record-low in 2012 of 11.3 percent.” It was no coincidence that this decline in union membership has paralleled the erosion of our middle class.

“Increased union participation would likely mean more income for the middle class, while raising pay for nonunion workers in industries with a strong union presence,” as reported by the *Economic Policy Institute* in 2009.

So how did unions become unpopular? Opposition primarily stems from businesses' long-term adversarial relationship with unions because they are uninterested in paying higher wages. (This attitude is shown to be counterproductive in many instances, because paying higher wages motivates workers to be more productive on their

jobs and enables them to increase their buying power, thereby stimulating the economy.)

Unions were long opposed by conservative politicians, the Chamber of Commerce, big and small businesses, and right-wing media. That was a powerful set of opponents. Their combined pressure has resulted in union membership falling from 33 percent of all workers in 1950 to 11 percent in 2012. According to the *Bureau of Census*, only 7 percent of private sector employees now belong to unions.

Unions had held their own in our country until along came President Ronald Reagan and the air traffic-controllers strike of 1981, which has been called one of the most important events in late-20th century U.S. labor history. As public employees, their strike was illegal and Reagan summarily fired over 11,000 of them.

The results were astonishing. All over the country, management quickly climbed on the bandwagon, contracting wages and benefits of their workers. This erosion of workers' benefits has continued to this day.

It is not that workers don't want unions. “There has been an increase in workers

expressing an interest in joining unions since the mid-1980s. But this has largely been thwarted by a hostile political and economic climate against organized labor,” according to Wikipedia's *History of Union Busting in the United States*.

Then the judiciary chipped in to weaken the role of the unions in our society. Starting with President Reagan's term in office, Republicans occupied the White House for 20 out of the next 28 years. During that time, important judicial appointments to the Supreme Court and Federal Appeals Courts made by the Presidents were all going to conservatives, who had no love for the unions.

They consistently ruled against and stripped unions of their power little by little. As a result unions lost most of their bargaining rights and it became harder to sign up new members, collect dues and unionize new shops as case after case was decided against unions.

As recently as June 30, 2014 the Supreme Court ruled again in one of those 5-4 split decisions that home care workers do not have to pay dues to public employee unions. Commenting on that and other recent decisions, *The New York Times* of July 2, 2014 said, “It

see UNIONS, page 10



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## Justice or not

by Peggy Donham  
Groundcover Vendor #98

(Some readers may find the sexual abuse references in this article disturbing.)

I want to share a very private situation in my life that I have been dealing with for these past few months. I've disclosed this only to a few close friends, in part, because I feel ashamed and embarrassed about what has happened to me. And I want to believe it's not my fault, but I can't help but feel it is.

I think if you have some knowledge of my history you may understand the emotions and feelings I've felt while I go through this situation. I've spent the past 26 years in and out of therapy, dealing with a childhood filled with incest, rape, abuse and molestation. From three years old, through childhood, adolescence, and adulthood I've suffered repeated abuses. Sharing my story, my hope is that you understand my frustration with the judicial system. And most important, in some way my story may help other people in similar situations.

On what seemed a normal day selling Groundcover News at the People's Food Co-op, as I do most days of the week, I was sweeping the sidewalk and picking up trash, with my back turned to a man I know – a man who has a history of being an alcoholic on a daily basis – who walked up behind me. He then pinched my butt and rubbed his hand

up and down my leg and behind many times. I turned around, very angry, holding the broom in my hand and I told him if he didn't get away from me I would hit him with the broom.

I wanted to hit him, but I didn't. He was more intoxicated than usual and said "I was just saying good morning." At this point, many emotions erupted from my past, my face and head felt hot, and all I was thinking was, "protect yourself."

When I'm in an extreme emotional place like this, it's painful and very difficult to calm my emotions. As if every emotional nerve was firing, my anxiety level was high and I was afraid of having an anxiety attack. For over an hour afterward, I felt tormented with anger and past emotions of helplessness. I thought I needed to do something, yet I felt frozen by my emotions. A friend helped me out of this petrified place, telling me calling the police would be a positive action.

After explaining to the police what happened, the man was charged by the prosecuting attorney's office with fourth degree sexual assault.

Then came the court date. I was very nervous and anxious entering the court room. I thought he would be charged and sentenced with the original charge, but I was in for an awakening I didn't see coming. While I waited, a woman from Safe House introduced herself and told me she had to be in another court room during my case and would

not be available. Then I was taken to a small room off the court room with the prosecuting attorney, the detective from the case, and a woman who worked for the prosecutor. He asked me, what did I want to happen? I said, "I want him to be accountable for his actions."

It was then that the prosecutor took ten minutes to explain that I needed to consider that the original charge could cause a long, drawn-out court trial that could end in this man being found not guilty of any charge; that he would have to register as a sex offender and how difficult it would be for him to get a job or housing. As I sat there, I felt my anger rise, completely alone and backed into a corner with no choice but to agree to a lesser charge of assault and battery. I felt completely powerless in a situation I had counted on feeling powerful in.

Sitting in the courtroom afterward,

## Where's the urgency for shelter?

by Elizabeth S. Kurtz, Vendor #159

The election is upon us, and those in the homeless community are at a loss as to who will represent our interests in the county. It was only seven months ago that the Washtenaw County Commissioners politely and curtly informed a group of homeless individuals who approached them in April 2014 that emergency shelter was not a priority for them. As a result of that definitive response, dozens of individuals who might have otherwise been able to rebound from their circumstances became further entrenched in homelessness while living outside in the elements awaiting the November opening of the Delonis Warming Center.

The Commissioners fail to understand that shelter is much more than just providing enough warmth for survival, but involves year-round support in a clean, sanitary environment for an individual to recover. Without that, homelessness continues to remain a vicious cycle of survival.

listening to the judge speak to this man, tears ran down my face. The more I tried not to cry, the more tears I had. I felt that the only thing I could do was run from that courtroom. Needless to say, I left very disappointed.

I struggle with my emotions around this. I'm angry with the prosecuting attorney, the detective, Safe House, the court system, and sadly, myself. I know my residual feelings go deeper than just this one incident. I understand I had a choice, but it felt as if I had no choice but to go along with what the prosecuting attorney persuaded me to believe.

It was difficult for me to expose myself by revealing what happened to me. I'm embarrassed that this happened and I struggle with feeling angry towards myself, because I want to believe this wasn't my fault. My hope is that my article may help someone who reads this.

It is obvious that this board has put all of its eggs in one basket when it comes to fighting homelessness. While the Delonis Center plays a role in supporting some aspects of homelessness, it is far removed from others and leaves emergency shelter – the most fundamental and important element of this crisis – wanting.

Without emergency shelter, people are in constant crisis in this county. There was a significant number of deaths during the past year of people who are of the homeless community, yet no single commissioner candidate included the emergency shelter issue in her or his platform. It seems as though it has dropped from the collective thinking of our leaders. If we can't even discuss the issue, how are we going to resolve and repair it?

Hopefully, the elected commissioners will recognize the importance of giving human suffering the priority it deserves when they start their new term.



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# Bryant Community Center – helpful neighbors with the community in its heart

by Alice Newell  
Groundcover Contributor

What does a cute little prairie house on the corner of Eden Court and Champagne Drive in the Bryant Pattengill East neighborhood of Ann Arbor have to offer Washtenaw County residents? As I have experienced it, The Bryant Community Center (BCC) is a resourceful place to turn to, a bridge in the community that helps people to cross over troubled times.

Bryant is buzzing with activity during its weekday business hours. Food, counseling programs, tutoring, and community gatherings are among the many services they offer. The center is run by the Community Action Network (CAN), a non-profit organization whose aim is to help county residents overcome hard times through programs that empower and implement positive change for families.

BCC began in 1977-78, and operated from the Hills Clubhouse until the City of Ann Arbor provided the neighborhood with a small ranch house. The city recently acquired a house next door to BCC so that the center can expand. The two buildings will be connected by a new main entrance that will include a large covered porch, where community members can gather and talk or wait with some protection to enter the center. Three Thursdays each month, when the community center hosts the massive food distributions, there's a line 60 to 70 people deep before the center even opens.

The Center's operations are spread throughout the bedroom and a large multipurpose room that's attached to the back of the building. One room houses an emergency food pantry, stocked by Food Gatherers, that is open daily from 1 p.m. until 8 p.m. for anyone who is in need. Food Gatherers' deliveries on Wednesday evenings stock the shelves for the big food distributions on three Thursdays each month, starting at 8:30. Washtenaw County residents can visit the pantry twice a month, but one Thursday each month is reserved for those living in the immediate Bryant Park area.

The other rooms contain counseling spaces and drop-in computers for public use. There are financial counseling, women's groups and support groups for adults. There are also after-school programs for elementary and high school students, which include tutoring and homework help plus activities to sharpen their skills. It's seen not only as a place to turn for help but also a positive outlet for both adults and youth.

Melva Pressly, a longtime volunteer and



BCC director Derrick Miller reminds us of the eponymous teacher in *The Ron Clark Story*.

member of the BCC Board of Directors, informed me that even though the new building has not been connected as of yet, it is already being used for after-school tutoring, student activities and dinner programs. The after-school activities that Bryant provides help sharpen student learning skills. Pressly sees empowerment increase when we give back to the community and partner with families to meet their needs. Although there are still crises encountered in East Pattengill, its residents feel more secure with the Bryant Community Center providing programs to help children, sowing seeds towards a better tomorrow.

The BCC's current director, Derrick Miller, is similar to the likable and inspiring teacher in the biographical movie, *The Ron Clark Story*. He came to the center with a background in teaching, at first filling summer positions in the community at camps as well as other learning events around the Washtenaw County area, but when CAN's previous director heard of the great impact Miller was making on the children he was teaching, they offered him the head position at Bryant. This expanded Miller's opportunities to teach.

Since Miller's arrival, the neighborhood has increasingly valued and taken pride in how the Center uplifts families. For example, the Center's food distribution program is one of the largest in the Washtenaw County area. In the beginning, with only 100 visits per month, they gave away an average of 6,000 pounds of food, but as of July of 2014, it has increased to between 250 and 400 visits per month, giving away about 25,000 pounds of food to the community annually.

Miller said that they "rely heavily on volunteer manpower when it comes to helping reach their desired goals.

neighborhood crime. It is the clients, resident-volunteers and staff working cooperatively who are creating a positive change in the community.

Bryant serves a huge range of people of different origins, languages and cultures. It is open seven days a week, responding to the need of each season. With their anticipated expansion project for 2015, Miller and the rest of the staff look forward to increased program activity within the newly added space. With summer programs, serving meals, paid summer employment programs for teens, Athletes in Action and other great contributions they offer the community, it is clear that they are more than just a place to get food.

Miller smiled and said, "There are too many nice fruits of memorable moments to pick from."

Miller appreciates Groundcover News pinpointing Bryant Community Center as a resourceful, friendly place to turn to for help. This non-profit organization has stretched beyond its calling of placing value in people and bridging the poverty gap. It is a brilliant community connection of hope towards a better future. Thanks for being there, Bryant.

## Holiday Savings Event

### Help Us Help Kids!

Give back to the children of our community with the Kiwanis Thrift Sales annual Holiday Savings Event on Friday, December 5th and Saturday, December 6th at the downtown location from 9am – Noon.



### Kiwanis Thrift Sale

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Washington at First St.

Kiwanis Warehouse Sale  
Saturdays, 10am-1pm  
840 Airport Blvd.

[www.a2kiwanis.org](http://www.a2kiwanis.org)



## Nuns on the Bus steer interest in integrating social justice with politics

by Anne Laurance  
Groundcover Contributor

"We the People, WE THE VOTERS," headlined the Nuns on the Bus campaign through Michigan in time for registration of new voters. Nuns on the Bus is a group of activist Sisters, led by Simone Campbell – executive director of NETWORK and a member of the religious community Sisters of Social Service – who make it their mission to bring greater economic equality to the United States. Local Sisters are picked up in each state the bus visits. The Bus toured Michigan from Muskegon to Traverse City, Battle Creek, Flint and Ann Arbor.

On September 28, the Bus pulled up at the University of Michigan School of Social Work, where the six sister-passengers joined locals in a table discussion focusing on how change can be made to systems that do not serve the people. Impediments to change were examined and new approaches suggested.

Impediments mentioned included old saws like voter apathy but also newer observations, such as the information bubble in which so many of us live. Between Facebook selecting for its users posts with which they are likely



Following the discussion, attendees added their signatures to those on the bus calling for voter turnout.

to agree and television stations' strong ideological bents, many people now only encounter ideas that resonate with what they already believe to be true. There is little opportunity for alternatives like the Green Party to get coverage, or for the kinds of serious, multi-faceted discussions in which breakthroughs can occur.

"We all listen to what we want to hear, not to a diversity of thought," stated Campbell.

One suggestion for change was to make it personal when talking about doing what is right and to reframe the debate from making a business case to making investments in communities. To wit: sharing selfies on a background of your favorite government program in April as part of the second annual Tax Pride Day.

Empowering people to speak up and point out voting against self-interest was one answer to the question, "How do we move forward?" Providing a forum for young people to organize around their issues was another, with

one student participant suggesting a key role for "big data." Another suggestion was finding innovative ways, such as providing childcare, to encourage more female candidates to run for public office.

A new hope seemed to emerge, and people looked encouraged by the end of their time together. Participants then proceeded outside and signed the sides of the bus as a pledge to vote.

"We the People, WE THE VOTERS" left us plenty to think about and plenty to do:

**Vote.** Strong voter turnout overpowers the influence of big money in politics. Dollars can't vote; you can.

**Encourage others to vote.** This way, we make sure their voices are heard. Urge and help others to vote.

**Hold candidates responsible.** When we demand that politicians commit to policies that benefit the 99%, we can hold them accountable when they are elected.

The group also identified **seven key justice issues** to raise when contacting elected officials:


1. Enact a living wage.
2. Protect immigrant rights.

see NUNS, page 10

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## St. Francis of Assisi

PARISH

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*God, let us remember that "under your wings there is refuge" (Psalm 91:4).  
May we offer that refuge to our homeless brothers and sisters.*

Mass Schedule

**Saturday**  
5:00 p.m.

**Sunday**  
7:00 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 12:30 p.m. 5:00 p.m.

St Francis of Assisi Parish  
2250 East Stadium Blvd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
(734) 769-2550  
www.stfrancisa2.com



Sudoku ★★★★★☆ 4puz.com

	6	8	7					
2	3					8		
			3		1			
8	1			9	5		4	
7		4				1		9
	2		1	4			8	3
			5		4			
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					8	3	5	

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Cryptoquote

XPSXQXSIBM RTVVXGVOPG  
GT B WLTIA OHHTLG – GUBG  
XK FUBG VBJOK B GOBV FTLJ,  
B RTVABPZ FTLJ, B KTRXOGZ  
FTLJ, B RXQXMXCBGXTP FTLJ.  
– QXPRO MTVYBLSX

ACROSS

- Footwear
- "\_\_\_\_\_ are stubborn things..."
- Piece of music
- Oil
- Of a sensory organ
- Educating \_\_\_\_\_
- Arrived
- Wrathful
- Leaked vascular fluid
- Dawdle
- Language (suffix)
- Pitch's complement
- \_\_\_\_\_ to reason
- Abbreviation on a boarding pass
- Piquancy
- Coiffure
- Unrendered tallow
- Colonial college
- More cunning
- Kilmer poem
- Texas border river
- Kislev's successor
- Group of two couples, twice
- Ornamented pointers
- City at I-80 and US-395
- Image records
- Geographic representations
- Vied for election
- Viscous
- Hadean or Archean
- Java or Tasman
- Stylist's implement
- 1904 car model
- Roger Rabbit and his ilk
- Donated
- River of Middle Earth
- Consolidate
- Perpetually
- French town
- Aristocrat's home
- Rip

DOWN

- Show approval
- Scottish singer
- Decedent's bio
- Famous billionaire
- Golfer's milieu
- Titan of Greek myth
- Decapod

The golf bag

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
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41				42		43				44				
45					46			47		48				
49					50		51			52		53		
		54				55			56		57			
58	59			60			61	62				63	64	65
66			67		68						69			
70					71						72			
73					74						75			

- King of the Lombards, and namesakes
- Investigator
- Ball
- Construction machine
- Western Indians
- Jazz band, or their singer
- Devour
- Wish someone well
- Edmonton athlete
- Camera lens aperture setting
- Ted Cassidy role
- Eschewer of alcohol
- Not
- Light
- Actress Freeman
- Gillingham's partner
- Cogs
- Poetry collection

- Zeno's disciple
- Author of *The Faerie Queene*
- Ancient warrior's shield
- River in Iceland
- Monetary unit of Sweden
- Country in the Sahara Desert
- Gardener's need
- Gaelic
- Butcher's commodity
- \_\_\_\_\_ the Wild
- Babble madly
- Dutch \_\_\_\_\_
- "The Angry Video Game \_\_\_\_\_"
- Any nonzero number with a zero exponent

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1, or the face value of the paper. I agree not to ask for more than face value or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell

to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to:  
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734-707-9210



Bethlehem United Church of Christ

423 S. Fourth Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
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(734) 665-6149

Bethlehem Church is the home of the Ground Cover office.

Sundays:

8:30 am and 10:00 am - Worship Services  
10:15 am – Sunday school  
Fellowship Hour follows each service

Upcoming Community Events

(Bethlehem-ucc.org for more details)

**Saturday, Nov. 15** Women's Bazaar and Luncheon, 9:30 am-2:00 pm  
Luncheon 11am-1pm  
Bake Sale, Crafts, Quilt Display, and more.

**Friday, Nov. 21** German Pretzel Sales, 11am-2pm, \$1 each or \$10 dozen

**Thursday, Nov. 27** Happy Thanksgiving

**Saturday, Dec. 6** Ann Arbor Symphony "Sing Along with Santa" 1:30pm

[www.bethlehem-ucc.org](http://www.bethlehem-ucc.org)  
[www.facebook.com/bethlehemucca2](https://www.facebook.com/bethlehemucca2)  
[www.pinterest.com/bethlehemucca2](https://www.pinterest.com/bethlehemucca2)  
[www.youtube.com/user/BethlehemChurchA2](https://www.youtube.com/user/BethlehemChurchA2)



## Outside, too

by Elizabeth S. Kurtz, aka Lit  
Groundcover Vendor #159

Hi La Shawn,

Just wanted to let you

Know that I feel I have lived

Outside most of my life, too.

Being the only girl child placed me

Well outside of my family circle;

The rules of a patriarchy

Eclipsed my spirit at an early age

Placing me on the outside of my own emotions.

You know as well as do I that living outside is no place for growth

And so I didn't.

Later I lived outside of friendships

Somehow lacking the social cues to meaningfully connect

When it mattered.

I feel ya Girl!

Do you feel me?

A few years ago

I began to find my way

Inside for the first time.

Once inside I looked around

My spirit and soul

I liked what I saw on the inside, I began to grow

For the first time even thrive

And then I woke up one

Morning on the outside again.

This time

Living in my car

I am on the outside now

Working my way back inside

But my life outside somehow

Strengthens my spirit inside.

Living on the outside

Ain't all bad

If you can cope.

Stay in touch —

Lit

When you do crack

by Paula Anderson

Groundcover Vendor #157

When you do crack

you really need to get back on track

or you may never get back

before you get an attack

and end up in a sack

that will be tacked.

### Skin

by Jon Couling

Groundcover Contributor

My oh my,  
oh the skin you're in!  
And please do tell me  
where it stops  
and where it does begin

Almost thoughtless,

the night sky has made it flawless  
In patterns grooved and almost lawless

### On Giving

by Karen L. Totten

Groundcover Contributor

People give what they can—

salad in a cracked dish,

wine from the corner store—

and the giving should be easy,

no awkward pause

if a berry has a soft

bruise, or the wine no cork.

To recognize a gift

is the hardest part,

wrapped as it often is in apology

or so subtle one doesn't

notice how a hand is extended.

### TOO LATE

by Carolyn Petersen

Groundcover Contributor

She was a poorly

cared for cherub

big blue eyes

curly blonde hair

shyly sweet

responsive to my interest

we smiled in her presence

the small girl accompanied

her mother

to outpatient research

sat quietly

with children's books

as she waited.

Her pre-school notified

Social Services several times

of bruises

and lack of winter clothes

this child received

attention

after the mother's boyfriend

beat her to death.

There is plenty

of guilt

to go around.



## Why and when “unions” became a dirty word

continued from page 4

[the Supreme Court] remains solicitous of corporate rights and efforts to curb union power.” This means that more setbacks for unions from the courts are likely to be on the horizon.

There were societal factors, as well, that didn’t play well for unions in our country. There were negative associations with socialism, the old “workers of the world unite” syndrome, which clashed with capitalistic values and the rugged individualist ethos that pervades our country.

There was jealousy – “mostly by uneducated, middle-class white guys, who don’t really have many prospects for career advancement because of their limited education and base skill set.... So they end-up siding with the corporations and management to get rid of unions and collective bargaining,”

claimed the blog *BloodMeridian4ever*, in September, 2013.

There was also the negative publicity and association of unions with law breakers. It doesn’t matter that the corporate types have been much larger swindlers, manipulating our legal system, while taking billions from us. It was the unions that took the rap for racketeering in the public’s eyes.

Just recently, there was finally a glimmer of hope on the horizon. “The general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board ruled that McDonald’s could be held jointly liable for labor and wage violations by its franchise operators – a decision that, if upheld, would disrupt longtime practices in the fast-food industry, and provide an easy way for unionizing nationwide,” according to *The New York Times* of July, 29, 2014. This could also affect other businesses, especially those who use franchises.

Looking at all of these negative factors, the cards seem to be stacked against labor in our country. Thomas Piketty says in his book, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, “Violent extremes of wealth and income are inherent to capitalism.”

Piketty calls the period of labor’s strength post-World War II an “aberration.” Well, if that is the case, *hip-hip-hurray* for aberrations. We can only hope that labor re-emerges and re-claims its position as a potent force that successfully fights big capitalists in our society. Only then will a true middle-class once again brighten our horizons. Labor faces a formidable task in accomplishing this goal, but it is something we desperately need.

My father would be thrilled if all this came to pass.

## Nuns on the Bus

continued from page 7

3. Secure healthcare for all.
4. Create a Faithful Budget to protect the common good.
5. Promote non-violent solutions to conflict.
6. Create responsible taxes for the benefit of the common good.
7. Control “big money” in elections.

Each one can make a difference with voice and vote. That’s the final, and powerful, message from Nuns on the Bus. As one participant said, “If your vote doesn’t matter, why are they making it so difficult for you to vote?”

For information about voter registration and Election Day reminders, text: NUNS to 877 877, or go to [nunsonthebus.org/vote](http://nunsonthebus.org/vote).

## Are you a homeless veteran in Washtenaw County?

The Washtenaw County Department of Veterans Affairs assists county veterans and their dependents in the pursuit of all veteran related benefits, including those related to the following:

- Disability Compensation
- Pension
- Burial/Death
- Financial Assistance
- Housing
- Utilities
- Medical
- Transportation
- Education
- Insurance
- Home Loan Guarantees

If you are a veteran in need of benefits please call **(734) 973-4540**.

### Days and Hours of Operation

Monday-Thursday:

Walk In Service: 8:30 am - 12:00 pm

Appointments: 1:00 pm to 5:30 pm

Closed for Lunch: 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Closed: Fridays/Holidays

### Additional Resources in Washtenaw County

**Housing Access for Washtenaw County (HAWC)** is the single point of entry for all shelters in the county-any resident in Washtenaw County experiencing a housing emergency can call. **(734) 961-1999**

**Delonis Center** offers emergency housing for both male and female homeless (90 days maximum stay). **(734) 662-2829**

**Father Patrick Jackson House (Father Pat's)** is a non-denominational residential program serving homeless, pregnant and parenting adolescents and their children. **(734) 761-1440**

**Interfaith Hospitality Network** provides temporary shelter, food and support services in a caring atmosphere of dignity and safety. **(734) 822-0220**

**Ozone House** provides emergency shelters and other needs to homeless teens or young people in serious conflict with their families.

- Ann Arbor: **(734) 662-2265**
- 24 Hour Crisis Line (Ann Arbor): **(734) 662-2222**
- Ypsilanti: **(734) 485-2222**

**SAFE House** provides services for any person victimized in an intimate relationship that lives or works in Washtenaw County. **(734) 995-5444**

**SOS Community Services** Housing Crisis Services Team provides information and referral services, short-term crisis counseling, limited financial assistance when available, and coordination of services with other agencies for families who are experiencing housing difficulties. **(734) 961-1999**

**Staples Family Center** provides a 90 day program to single individual and families in order to help them become independent and assists with mainly with housing arrangement, in addition to employment and other related matters. **(734) 761-7750**

**Avalon Housing** develops and manages permanent affordable housing for people who are homeless and for people with very low incomes. Call for application information. **(734) 663-5858**



## Austrian architects convert shipping containers for MISSION intake center

by Renna Ayyash and Susan Beckett  
Groundcover Contributors

People are becoming more interdependent than ever before, increasing the need for efficient communication. The R&D Architect School of Austria found an innovative way to tackle that goal while making a difference.

Students and faculty from the R&D (translated into English: Space and Design) teamed up with University of Michigan (U-M) School of Art and Design Assistant Professor Roland Graf and MISSION, the non-profit that sponsored Camp Take Notice and runs Mercy House, in a cross-cultural education project that fulfilled a MISSION need for a welcome center at their Stone School property. R&D students converted two shipping containers into portable rooms for MISSION. The rooms were wallpapered with a map of R&D's home city, Linz, and served as a presentation forum as they traveled the Midwest.

The R&D school first opened its doors in 2006. It differentiates itself from other design schools by pushing its students not merely to understand the concepts of interface design, art, and architecture, but also how to implement those ideas in the public sphere by having students work with different public sector entities to practically apply their skills.

Furthermore, students are also encouraged to more actively participate in the public sector through their position as designers. They stress innovative learning within their school and strive to bring that to common society, as well.

In addition, the school likes to emphasize flexibility to its students. Art is a constantly changing field, with new and different ideas always emerging; students must know how to accommodate such an environment. In order to



MISSION folks prepare for ribbon cutting on the Stone School welcome center made from shipping containers by aspiring architects from Austria.

develop these skills, students attend lectures, special workshops and field trips related to their studies.

The school makes one special international field trip every year to explore the culturally relevant concepts of their host country. Because the United States is currently setting the standard for modern architecture, it was the choice for the 2014 trip. R&D visited the Midwest this fall. Professor Alexander Beck of R&D coordinated the trip through U-M's Graf.

Graf informed Beck about the organization MISSION, a local group that fills the gap between living on the streets and finding permanent housing. Graf suggested that the R&D group collaborate with MISSION to further their goal of creating a permanent welcome center and eventually a shelter locale for those without housing.

Two members of MISSION's board, Caleb Poirier and Greg Pratt, were flown to Austria for a week to work with the team of 10 students on developing something that would be immediately useful. They settled on a welcome center for people arriving and

looking for help and some office space to support the welcome center.

The Austrian team decided to retrofit shipping containers to meet these needs. After learning that shipping them from Austria would be prohibitively expensive, they proceeded to do the design work in Austria – decorating the interior with an inviting map of their city, Linz with a white Danube River flowing through it – then proceeded to Detroit where they purchased two shipping containers and trucked them to a parking lot at the U-M School of Art and Design. There, they did the actual work of adding doors and wiring for electricity, insulating the unit, and decorating the walls.

Once the transformation was complete, they put the containers back on a truck and traveled to Pittsburgh, where they set up the containers on the campus of Carnegie Mellon. Thus was started the

project "R&D on the Road," a tour of retrofitted steel containers throughout the Midwest.

R&D sees itself as an urban think tank and wants to encourage people from all backgrounds to come together and communicate. Before the shipping containers were placed in their permanent home, the group thought they could be used as such a forum.

Their goal was to increase awareness of the need for global cooperation and interaction. They achieved this goal by offering small concerts in their steel containers and workshops on communication to specific participating partners.

After Carnegie Mellon, the steel containers visited Cleveland's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. They finally returned to Ann Arbor to the MISSION property on Stone School. They were initially set up facing each other and used as a bandstand/nightclub for a welcome concert.

Eventually, the containers will be set up in an L-shape with the side door of the Welcome Center leading to the side door of the office wing. The containers are currently being used for storage while surveyors determine exactly where they can be set up in a location that is outside the flood plain.

To learn more about the R&D School of Design, you can visit [www.strategies.ufg.ac.at](http://www.strategies.ufg.ac.at).

To learn more about Camp Take Notice and MISSION, visit [www.missiona2.org](http://www.missiona2.org).

"Come, come, whoever you are. Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving. It does not matter. Ours is not a caravan of despair. Come, even if you have broken your vows a thousand times. Come, yet again, come, come."

— Rumi

## Cryptoquote Solution

Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.

— Vince Lombardi

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## Maple mashed potatoes



by Lisa Sonnenburg  
Groundcover Contributor

An easy, tasty side dish for your Thanksgiving feast! Serves 6.

### Ingredients

4 sweet potatoes (wash well, but leave the skins on!)

½ cup maple syrup

¼ cup olive oil

2 green onions, minced

Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Bake the sweet potatoes until tender and soft, about 45-60 minutes (depending on your oven and size of the potatoes).
3. Toss the baked potatoes into a bowl, along with the olive oil and maple syrup.
4. Mash well.
5. Add salt and pepper (to taste) and green onions.
6. Stir briefly and serve.

Note: Maple syrup is expensive, but worth the purchase. It lasts a long time, it's a great natural sweetener and you don't need very much!

Recipe adapted from Michael Smith, *Chef at Home*.

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## Strange (but Mostly True) Stories About a Mother and her Daughter • Cy Klone © 2014

This sure seems like a bad season for allergies!

**AHH CHOO!** mew!

You're funny! The usual "God bless you" response to sneezing traces to old beliefs spirits might be lost or harmed during sneezing. Is that the reason for your funny little noise?

Well, we can't be too careful, can we?

What do you mean?

**Ahh choo!** mew!

We are very lucky to have a healthy human caring for us. Our lives would be much less awesome if our human got sick.

You have a point. Though I still don't get the point of your funny noises.

They're my "check engine" alerts so our human knows I'm monitoring his health. It's the least we can do for him after all he does for us.